



**Testimony of Jennifer Greuel
Economic Development Association of North Dakota
In Support of HB 1425
House Finance and Taxation Committee
Feb. 2, 2021**

Chair Headland and members of the House Finance and Taxation Committee:

My name is Jennifer Greuel and I am the executive director of the Economic Development Association of North Dakota (EDND). EDND represents more than 80 state economic development organizations and businesses on the front line of economic development efforts throughout North Dakota. The primary purpose of the organization is to promote the creation of new wealth throughout North Dakota, develop more vibrant communities and improve quality of life. I would like to express our support for HB 1425.

EDND believes Legacy Fund dollars were intended for legacy purposes and should therefore be invested in long-term strategies to benefit future generations. According to a recent survey of EDND members, 100 percent of those surveyed agreed the fund should be used to support infrastructure. The growth of our state over the last decade, combined with aging infrastructure, has led to a critical need to complete road, water, sewer, stormwater management, airport, and other essential projects. New and updated infrastructure provides support to North Dakota businesses already providing jobs and revenue to the state, as well giving the state the capacity to grow and diversify strategically.

Currently North Dakota is sending its investments out of state and out of country to help others complete projects and other businesses succeed. North Dakotans deserve, and overwhelmingly want, their money to stay in state and help North Dakota succeed. One major disadvantage North Dakota has when competing with other states and trying to diversify its economy is that other states offer cash or other upfront incentives that can be tailored to meet a targeted prospect's needs. An example of this is neighboring South Dakota's Future Fund, which provides flexible grants in discretionary amounts dependent on the company's needs (workforce training, wage base, real estate development, infrastructure, and broader financial assistance needs). Our state has a lot to offer and investing in our own businesses would help retain and attract businesses to help diversify the economy. EDND believes the Legacy Fund could be used as our state's secret weapon to create vibrant communities full of economic opportunities for current and future North Dakotans.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our support for HB 1425 and for your continued commitment to keeping North Dakota globally competitive and diversifying the economy.